

THE LABOUR ORGANISER

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LABOUR'S NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

The Case for Self-Determination in Constituency Representation

By HERBERT MORRISON, J.P., Secretary to the London Labour Party

At the last Annual Conference of the Labour Party I moved on behalf of the London Labour Party a series of amendments to the Party Constitution respecting the manner of electing the representatives of constituency organisations on the National Executive.

On a show of hands the amendments were carried—in the words of the official report—"by a fair majority." On a card vote, however, they were defeated by 1,597,000 to 1,211,000. If the sense of justice in the conference is appealed to at Brighton and the case put to the unions in a friendly spirit, there should be a good chance of carrying the amendments this year.

Let me make clear things as they are and things as they ought to be from my point of view :—

The Constitution as it is :—

The National Executive shall be elected by the annual conference as a whole, and shall consist, apart from the treasurer, of (a) thirteen representatives of the affiliated organisations, (b) five representatives of the Local Labour Parties, and (c) four women.

The Constitution as the amendment would make it :—

The National Executive shall be elected by the annual conference, and shall consist, apart from the treasurer, of (a) thirteen representatives of the affiliated organisations to be elected by the delegates representing national affiliated

organisations only, (b) five representatives of the Local Labour Parties to be elected by the delegates of Local Labour Parties only, and (c) four women to be elected by the conference as a whole.

The amendment would free the trade unions and other national societies from having the election of their representatives influenced in part by the Local Labour Parties, and it would secure that the representatives of the Local Labour Parties were really chosen by the delegates from the local bodies.

As things are the two sections indicated possess the right of sectional nomination, but when it comes to the more important process of actual election, the conference votes as a whole. In law I believe this would be called a device. It is a device which—at any rate so far as constituency representation is concerned—renders farcical the language of the Party Constitution when it talks about "representatives of the Local Labour Parties," for out of a total vote in last year's conference of 3,709,000, the Local Labour Party vote numbered only 258,000.

I have never been one of those who have attacked the big influence of the trade unions in the Party conference. Financially they are the biggest factor in the Party; they represent large masses of industrially organised work-people whose point of view is of profound importance to the Party; they possess great political potentialities.

On the other hand, however, I respectfully suggest to the trade unions that it would be a grave mistake on their part to underestimate the vital importance to the political Labour Movement of the local organisations of the Party. A political party may be blessed with much money and many millions of affiliated members, but its political power in the constituencies will depend primarily on the intelligence, vitality, and self-reliance of the constituency organisations.

The Labour Party should be the last to say that numbers and money are the only points to be considered in the composition of the Party Executive. Function must be recognised, and the important function represented by the local organisations ought to be definitely and really represented in the deliberations of the Executive. The absence of such adequate representation is not only a loss to the local organisations: it is a loss to the Party as a whole, and it creates a danger of the Executive being one-sided and incomplete.

Further, it is highly desirable that the Labour Party should become more and more a political party and beware of the danger of being a mere aggregation of economic interests. As time goes on it is likely that our Labour M.P.'s will develop more distinctly into politicians—in the best sense of that much-abused word!—and be less readily inclined to view parliamentary problems from a sectional economic angle. I do not underestimate the importance to the Party of practical industrial knowledge on given problems, but when political attack or defence is needed our speakers should be chosen with regard to political fighting capacity rather than in relation chiefly to association with industrial groups.

All this has its bearing on the composition of the Executive. I submit that the existing system of election does not provide for adequate representation of the distinctly political and organising bodies in the constituencies.

After all, we are not asking for much. The right of nomination of a few members of the Executive has not been taken away from us: all we are asking is that the constituency representation allowed under the Constitution—I claim no increase in the number—shall be made real by the constituency organisations electing as well as nominating their representatives, and that the unions, &c., shall have the right to elect their representatives without interference from the local bodies.

We ask only for justice. Surely it will be conceded.

OUT OF THE RUT

IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES IN BRIEF

We make no apology for referring once again to the Watford scheme for enrolling individual members. The result of the first six months' work is now to hand, and the total number of members secured has been 1,004, of whom 522 are men and 482 are women. The total amount collected has been £132 3s. 10d., and members pay from 1d. per week to 5s. per month. It should be mentioned that concurrently with this scheme Watford has been launching an ambitious scheme for a Labour club, and this matter has also been carried to a successful conclusion, and we hope in a near issue to give a notice of same. It is interesting also to note that a house-to-house collection for the miners, organised by Mr. H. W. Julian, the agent, and Mr. Hodge, the assistant, realised over £60. A Labour and Co-operative demonstration and sports is being organised for July 9.

An interesting budget of literature has reached us from the Hastings by-election, where Mr. H. J. Short, of 4 Claremont, acted as agent. Apparently the material for the canvass was prepared on novel lines, for we note that the electors' names were written up in little booklets 5 by 2½ inches, the pages being printed in counterfoil fashion. Thus, all the usual particulars

written on canvass cards were on the counterfoil, and the tear-off portion contained the canvasser's report and remarks. The registered number being written on both the counterfoil and tear-off would be sufficient for tracing purposes, and probably the advantage found in this system would be that the canvasser, instead of handing the card when complete into the committee room and so parting with all his information, would still have in his counterfoils material for further work if necessary. The system conceivably has its dangers, though the little booklets are attractive and possess many advantages.

The Heywood and Radcliffe by-election will be noted for its slogan—"Halls for each and each for Halls." We have more than once in the LABOUR ORGANISER emphasised the advantages of a telling phrase, and whatever the result of the election there will be very little doubt but that the slogan helped. The *Election Special*, which has reached us, is an exceptionally well got up and effective news sheet in which appeals to the different classes of electors have been well and ably put.

We note that at a recent executive meeting of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Labour Federation a scheme of insurance against victimisation for Labour activities was considered and is to be dealt with at the half-yearly meeting of the general conference. It is interesting to note that the Federation have decided that, in future, circulars ordinarily sent to affiliated organisations should also be sent to the delegates from those bodies. Much advantage would be gained from a more general adoption of this plan by our Local Labour Parties, and, undoubtedly, it would result in more attention being paid to circulars sent out.

In this issue the Pioneer Press of Woolwich make an announcement of a free set of the literature issued in connection with the famous Woolwich

by-election, and we would urge those interested to take advantage of this exceptional offer. One of the sets referred to have come to hand, and it should prove of great service in the hands of those conducting elections. There is always much to learn, and the cleanly printed and expert literature comprised in the sample set referred to contains much instruction and many ideas.

We note that in the Kingswinford Division in Staffordshire there are no less than six Labour clubs. A scheme is now being discussed for affiliation. Practically all parts of this division are now catered for by these prosperous clubs.

As an example of what can be done even in the present difficult times, it is interesting to note that in South Norfolk thirty-one parties, with seven hundred members, have been initiated during the past three months. Congratulations to Mr. R. A. Watson, whose transference from North Norfolk took place some three months ago.

The number of expressions of satisfaction with the LABOUR ORGANISER which the editor has received continues to grow. The total of such expressions runs into hundreds. We are happy to say that our advertisers also find the LABOUR ORGANISER a paying medium, as is evidenced by renewal orders and increased spaces. Miss Jessie Stephens writes: "I have found my advertisement in the LABOUR ORGANISER quite a paying speculation, as I have only a very few vacant dates in August and one or two in September, which I have no doubt will be filled soon. This is quite good, as I have not advertised in the other papers yet."

The Leamington Labour Party are to be congratulated upon putting the Labour News Service to a very practical use. It is to be discovered pasted on the Party notice board, on the street level, where all may read and learn. We trust others will follow the lead.

THE SECRETARY'S PAGE

Help and Hints in Season

Complaints are sometimes heard of the inability of secretaries to get speakers. A few hints on the way to secure return visits from them when once booked may prove of value. Speakers are largely influenced in accepting second engagements by the business qualities of their previous connection with the district. It goes without saying that no speaker likes to address a badly organised meeting, and it is sheer injustice to expect a speaker to do his best before a miserable audience in a meeting which has been convened without sufficient booming and advertisement. If a speaker has been engaged some distance ahead do not leave a reminder until the last few days; this should be sent at least ten days prior to the meeting, and hospitality should not be forced on a speaker or the speaker be placed in the position that he is either to accept or risk offence. It is courtesy to ask if a room might be booked, or if, when offering hospitality, to offer to book a hotel if the speaker prefers. Hospitality very frequently means late hours and little sleep, and the speaker's health in this respect should be considered. If not possible to send full particulars of the meeting when reminding the speaker of the date these should be sent as soon as practicable and the mistake should not be made of putting a speaker down to speak on a particular subject without asking his consent. I have actually known a speaker not know what he was expected to speak about until the chairman announced the subject from the platform. This has happened to myself more than once. We are not all good at such competitions.

The speaker's expenses, if any, should be paid at once and he should not be put to the indignity of asking who is the officer responsible and of applying for the money before a room full of people. Preferably settle the business during the quiet consultation which it is always advisable should take place before the meeting.

If you would get a speaker to come again all the above points are worth consideration, and some little contact might be made with the speaker after he has gone away provided this is not abused and an irksome correspondence sought to be established. Many speakers like to receive a report of their meeting, and this little courtesy is well worth while. You may sometimes require a speaker during the holiday months, and busy men who have no time for ordinary holidays are apt to be tempted if they know that a few hours of quiet enjoyment may be stolen on the same day within a short distance of their meeting. A wink is as good as a nod to a blind horse, and you know what YOU have got in the neighbourhood and how to bring it home. A speaker is also always interested to learn of any development that arises from his meeting, even if some time afterwards, and that opportunity of making contact is a useful one. It should be remembered that speakers receiving many applications for dates will be inclined to give priority to those where the little thoughtfulness we have indicated have been observed.

The increased postal rates for printed matter are of some importance to local secretaries. The constant summoning of periodical meetings is a troublesome duty and one which in future will be costing more. We would strongly urge secretaries to save both money and trouble by dispensing with summonses for regular meetings. A time-table can be invariably got out after consultation with other kindred organisations as to their dates, and this in practice is much more likely to avoid clashes than the attempt to avoid them by turning regular meetings into movable feasts.

The constitution of the Labour Party does not embody any standing orders for Local Labour Parties and is silent on several minor points of procedure which in practice become important on such occasions as those on

which a parliamentary candidate is selected. I have frequently seen secretaries at conferences very perplexed as to what ought to be done to ensure absolute fairness on such occasions, and I have seen instances where the adoption of certain procedure that would have been accepted under normal circumstances might have led to quite different results concerning the selection than other procedure also quite normal and commonly accepted. At a recent selection meeting of the Burslem (Staffs) Party the procedure adopted seems very hard to improve upon and congratulations are due to the Burslem Executive and the secretary, Mr. G. H. Meir, for satisfactorily settling various points which in the past had caused considerable trouble. The conference referred to was one of the largest selection meetings I have attended and was admirably conducted throughout. The following recommendations were made by the Executive to the general meeting:—

- (1) That the voting be by ballot.
- (2) That one vote only be allowed at each ballot.
- (3) That the "nominee" receiving the least number of votes "fall out" until one nominee receives a clear majority of the votes cast.
- (4) That the four members of the Executive selected to take credentials on delegates entering the room distribute and count the ballot papers.
- (5) That each society or branch having a nominee appoint one of their delegates to act as "checkers" at the count.
- (6) That the National Party's representative act as the presiding officer's chief clerk at the count.

In the conference named no societies had representation who were in arrears with their affiliation fees, and a notification to this effect was sent out with the circulars. This resulted in outstanding fees being brought in, and as the circulars were also sent to certain

unaffiliated societies with a notification that they might affiliate and so become entitled to attend new affiliations were also brought in. At the Burslem Conference three nominees were voted upon and the ballot papers were printed and numbered. As a second ballot was possible Mr. Meir had thoughtfully had a supply of papers printed in two tints for that purpose. I have before me at this moment a sample of the "scrutineers' accounting card" and the "presiding officer's returning sheet," and apart from the advantages of a thoroughly impartial conduct of the proceedings the little business of election provided an entertaining and instructive interlude. It is gratifying to report that during the whole evening not one contentious voice was heard, and the whole proceedings, despite the division on the choice of candidates, passed off with remarkable harmony.

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LAW AND PRACTICE

[Under this heading we propose to print brief and chatty explanations of points of commoner interest concerning the Law and Practice of Elections. Readers are invited to suggest points for notice herein, but are reminded that suggestions made may not necessarily be dealt with in the next issue.—ED.]

A Knotty Point

BY THE EDITOR

QUESTION : A and B live in — and are on the voters' list for that constituency. The said A and B occupy jointly a greengrocer's stall in the covered market in D— Borough. They also occupy a stall on market days in the open market adjoining. The stall in the covered market is not of sufficient annual value to warrant them votes, so they couple with it the stall in the open market. I have approached the market inspector and he informs me that "no person may occupy a stall in the open market except on market days," namely, Fridays, Saturdays, and Mondays. Can I sustain an objection to the effect that A and B do not occupy the stall in the open market during the whole of the qualifying period?

The point involved in the above question arises out of Section 1 (3) of the 1918 Act as follows : "The expression 'business premises' in this section means land or business premises of the yearly value of not less than £10 occupied for the purpose of the business, profession, or trade of the person to be registered." It is unfortunate for a clear answer to the question that the whole of the facts are not stated. Is the stall in the covered market and that in the open market held under the one agreement, or are they separate and distinct tenancies? Is there any erection on the outside market which is permitted to remain on the days when the outer market is not otherwise open? As this is a joint tenancy is it alleged that the total value reaches £20?

The first point arising is whether the stall in the open market might properly be taken into consideration with the

tenancy in the covered market. There is an old case where this point was decided in respect of somewhat similar premises taken from the same landlord at the same time and at one entire rent. Unless these conditions are substantially satisfied it would be clear that the land "occupied" in the outer market could not be taken into consideration for the purpose of making up the value of the other qualification.

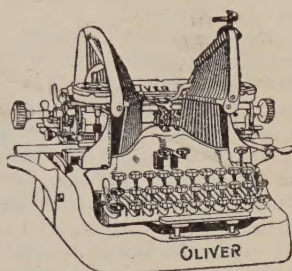
Assuming the above point is satisfactorily disposed of in favour of the claimant, it should not be assumed that the fiat of the markets inspector finally disposes of the question of "occupation." It should be remembered that the term "occupation" signifies in law not only an exclusive possession but also the actual exercise in fact of the rights of a person entitled in law to exclusive possession. Now it may conceivably be that there is an erection on the outer market which is permitted to remain during the whole time, and I think it would be possible on these premises to build up a "constructive occupation," for it is obvious that such a stall might be used for storage or advertisement, and certainly "for the purpose of the business, profession, or trade of the person to be registered" (not necessarily for the sale of goods) during the whole term.

I do not think that a covenant in an agreement not to sell on certain days, or otherwise only to sell on certain days, would entirely dispose of the question of "occupation" provided the erection remained. On the other hand, if there was no erection and the land in the open market was left free and open to the public it would seem absurd to suggest that there was any "occupation" of such exclusive nature as to constitute an "occupation" for the purposes of the Act. In a somewhat similar case which has been brought to my notice, a vote was given in respect of the outside market because, although only used on certain days, there existed a right to use on any day. Apparently a distinction was drawn between mere temporary disuse and non-occupation,

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and an effective occupation constructed from the repeated and legal exercise of the rights of occupancy.

It is interesting to note in respect of the section of the Representation of the People Act above quoted that it is no longer necessary that the occupation of premises should be "as owner or tenant." This point seems to have a particular application to the local offices of many of our trade unions and Local Parties. The occupier, who in some cases will be the district secretary or the Party agent, can in my opinion sometimes establish such an occupation as to entitle him to the vote in respect of the premises, apart from the question as to whether or not he is actually the tenant.

MAPS

By Alderman RICHARD MONTFORD, J.P.,
Metropolitan Borough of Islington.

It is beyond question that the intelligent use of maps can be made a most important factor in organising a constituency even though an electoral contest may not be imminent. It is equally certain that without maps an electoral contest must demand more, not only from those who have the direction of affairs, but also from those who offer some real service and find that, owing to lack of foresight, some of their limited time is wasted. Such helpers are seldom too numerous for the real organiser to usefully employ, but are a worry to him who has made no preparation. My object in writing this article is to pass in brief review some of the uses to which both marked and unmarked maps and plans of a constituency can be put.

My attention was first directed to this subject some quarter of a century ago when I was fulfilling an appointment with a political organisation on the committee of which happened to be the colonel in charge of the Ordnance Survey. I was dealing with the whole of the County of London and wanted maps for each constituency—there were no metropolitan borough councils at that time—and I consulted him. He invited

me to go over the Government map-making department of the Ordnance Survey, and there I learned much, and, with the friendly help of the officials, produced a large map of the county and also maps of each constituency in duplicate. These I mounted on thin cards of uniform size (10 in. by 12½ in.), using more than one card for a constituency where needed. I could carry these about when desired, and when worn they were easily renewed. They formed in practice a bunch of keys, and became indispensable to me in organising distributions of literature, delivery of circulars, canvassing electors, &c. These maps I kept up to date with an ever-increasing amount of private information marked on my office set.

I saw that the Ordnance Survey maps noted all water and the direction of its flow, all bridges and whether under or over a roadway, all paths whether public or private, all clumps of trees, all smithies, all rising ground, all declines, all cliffs and rocks, all telegraph and postal stations, in fact, everything in normal use which would be vital in case of invasion. And I learned that superimposed on these maps, which are sold publicly, is a mass of confidential military information supplemental to and strictly related to the public information. Now, if a map can serve such a national purpose why should we not use these public maps for electoral purposes, superimposing particulars to assist in our electoral organisation and campaigning? Why not mark the wards, polling areas, buildings suitable for public meetings, schools, usual places for holding open-air meetings, polling places and committee rooms as used at the last elections (your opponents' as well as your own), places where helpers can be housed, places where food can be obtained, in fact everything that can be recorded—even bill-posting places?

An agent newly appointed is often a stranger to the constituency, and the first thing he wants to know is the hang of the constituency, its polling areas, etc. By the aid of a local map and the

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register he personally acquires this knowledge easily enough. But during an election contest he will have many helpers, and his paid assistants will possibly be strange to the locality. Each of these latter should be provided with a local map marked in detail and prepared during the period before the election contest. If, because "it costs money," the preparation of maps is put off till the day of battle, the cost will be greater, organisation will be delayed and suffer, and greater effort will be required at a time it can least be afforded. The preparation of maps is essentially a peace-time occupation and will save the cost over and over again in increased efficiency.

With regard to the boundaries of wards and polling districts, the former is fixed by Order in Council, and the latter by an order of the local authority, and no difficulty should arise in obtaining copies of such orders. In my personal experience I have found a publican resident on the border of two polling districts registered for the one address in both polling districts, and I have found border-line houses entirely omitted. I once discovered a group of eight cottages on the border-line of two metropolitan boroughs which were on the registers of both boroughs. The property belonged to a distiller, and the tenants were all in his employ. Such cases are always explained away as clerical errors, but the Labour Party can afford neither to have its friends left off nor its opponents invested with double voting power. The use of my maps brought to light both of the foregoing errors, and many others.

It will often be found that a particular street is situate in two or more polling districts. I make a practice of keeping a list of such streets, recording thereon the actual house numbers proper to each district without regard as to whether they are demolished or empty or occupied by voters or non-voters. By this method I can always place a newly arrived supporter in his appropriate polling district whether his house number appears on the register

or not. I also make a note in the register of all houses on the constituency border-line, even when the street is in only one polling area.

The Ordnance Survey maps are of scales varying from four miles to the inch, to four inches to the mile. For different purposes the scale to be used will be different. Generally, a rural constituency should be marked on a map of smaller scale than is needed for an urban constituency, and a borough, especially if divided, on a larger scale. For the office wall, a map of the largest size convenient for the wall should be used. The area of the constituency will govern the scale to be used. Separate maps should be prepared for each unit of organisation on election day, *i.e.*, the polling district.

With such a series of up-to-date marked maps, and duplicate unmarked maps for the use of strangers to the locality who want to get quickly to a given spot—a canvasser to a particular street—a speaker to a particular hall, etc. the directing staff will find their job lightened and business dealt with more quickly than without such aids.

All electoral organisation leads up to the day of election, when the machine built by the agent will be put to the vital test of efficiency, and will either do its work or fail. Some elections are won with faulty machines, others lost although the machine is nearly perfect. Absolute perfection is impossible and would be a miracle, but nevertheless should be striven for. No agent is justified in leaving anything to chance or in neglecting to take the fullest advantage of every conceivable idea that offers assistance to the project in hand. And the intelligent use of maps is an idea that no live agent can afford to disregard.

[NOTE. We hope shortly to produce as a supplement to the LABOUR ORGANISER a specimen map prepared by Mr. W. S. Rainbird, Labour Agent, on the general principles Alderman Montford advocates, and which has been specially reproduced for our use. —EDITOR.]

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

By G. R. SHEPHERD

National District Organiser, Home and Southern Counties

Ever since I became officially connected with the Labour Party I have been in favour of developing its individual membership. In many constituencies, entire faith is placed upon society delegations for building up the political machinery of Labour, but I have always considered that a political movement must rely on the personal service of men and women, and that this personal service can only be generally secured from men and women who were prepared personally to become members in a financial and active sense.

The composition of the Labour Party makes provision for the affiliation of trade unions and their branches, together with many other societies that are prepared to accept its constitution and principles. I think it is necessary in every constituency that all eligible organisations should be attached to the movement. There are many things which we can secure from our affiliated membership in the way of influence, knowledge, and general support, but I think we ought to recognise that to merely constitute our Party upon the delegations from these organisations is to court failure in the political arena. We must secure, either from people unattached to these organisations or from the rank and file of the organisations themselves, an ever-growing army of men and women who are prepared to devote themselves as constantly and persistently to political action as some of their fellows have done to the industrial and co-operative sides of the great Labour Movement.

I think it ought to be generally recognised that the need of the Labour Party for a great individual membership functioning within the variety of organisation of which it consists is far greater than is the need of any other political organisation. As I am frequently pointing out to the parties which I visit, the Liberal and Conservative Parties in the past have had

nothing to fear from one another. The Conservative Party, when it assumed office, could always be depended upon to respect the legislation of its so-called opponent, and if a Liberal victory followed a Conservative defeat, then the legislation of the Conservative Party was almost entirely safe; but the coming into power of a Labour Government will not only mean a change in the personnel of office-holders, but will mean an entire change in legislation, and in all probability in the forms of government. It would not be safe to depend on the recognition by a capitalist Government which succeeded a Labour Government of the legislation which that Labour Government had placed on the Statute Book. Such things as land nationalisation, public ownership of the mines, and the acquisition by the Government of the railways would certainly be seriously interfered with, and would in all probability be swept on one side altogether. It therefore follows that Labour must possess a political machine capable, not only of gaining an electoral victory and the return of a Labour Government, but of maintaining that Labour Government in power afterwards. I can see no other way of achieving this purpose except through a great mass organisation of that part of the electorate which habitually votes Labour. Without this support in the constituencies, a Labour Government, once elected, would immediately begin to feel the lack of powerful backing in the country.

To put a big membership on its lowest value, one can sum it up in the words, "the organisation of the electorate for the purpose of an election." As an old campaigner, I realise in every election that the greater part of the energies of our election workers is concerned with persuading Labour voters to vote Labour. To me this always seems a waste of energy. We ought to confine our attack upon those people who may or may not vote for us, and upon those people who up to the present have consistently voted against us. Unless we are able to do

this during an election campaign, I can see us losing quite a lot of seats that ought to be always won by a Labour candidate. In the old days, we used to consider a marked register as of the utmost value, but in these days, with such an enormous electorate, many thousands of whom cannot be personally known to those responsible for the direction of the campaign, a marked register can give one very little confidence in a forecast of the poll. If only we organise ourselves on the lines I am suggesting, then with thousands of members attached to the Party on a paying basis, we could always determine beforehand the real solid strength of our Party. At the same time, by possessing a knowledge of the people who were attached to us, we could the more readily employ our forces on impressing the unattached or the out-and-out opponents.

In these few lines, therefore, I urge upon all parties throughout the country to devote their time in the way of organisation to building up the individual membership of the Party.

Lastly, I would say this, that if most of our Parties are suffering from lack of finance to-day, it is almost entirely due to the fact that we are confining the liabilities which our movement must necessarily face to a very few persons. The greater our membership, the smaller is the responsibility falling upon each one of us, and the greater are the resources from which we can secure the sinews of war. In my opinion, the greater part of the county divisions in this country can only finance themselves by acting upon this suggestion of a huge individual membership. Even where most of the men and women in these divisions are organised in trade union branches, the trade union branches are so small as a rule that their resources are too weak to give adequate support to the divisional or local machinery. We must, therefore, failing this supply, put ourselves in a way, within the organisation of the Party itself, to raise the necessary funds.

GOVERNMENT TRAINING SCHEME FOR POLITICAL AGENTS

Thimble-ringing at Tory Headquarters

While the Labour Party, at any rate in some areas, and through the medium of the LABOUR ORGANISER, have been developing the training of election workers and Parliamentary agents, the Coalition has not been inattentive. But, being in a position of peculiar advantages, it now appears from the answer to a question in the House of Commons that, quite characteristically, public money is being applied for the purpose in their case. The astounding fact comes out that several unemployed ex-officers have been sent to various departments in the Unionist Party for the purpose of training, and that the normal maintenance is being paid.

It is instructive to note that, after Dr. Macnamara had blandly informed his questioner that certain ex-officers were in training for the purpose in question, it required a supplementary question to extract the useful information that in each case the training was for the purpose of support to the present Party in power.

The scheme in question is open to grave abuse, and we trust that Labour agents at their coming conference will heartily condemn it. We note that the London Liberal Federation criticise the incident as a case of gross and unprecedented political corruption. May we offer a suggestion? As these men are being trained at public expense would it not be proper that after their period of training they should submit themselves for examination to a qualified body independent of their present employers, such as a joint board appointed by the National Association of Labour Registration and Election Agents and the Society of Certificated and Associated Liberal Agents?

We have to thank a number of secretaries who since our last issue have sent in copies of their annual reports. These will be acknowledged in due course.

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REGISTRATION OF ELECTORS

By C. G. E. FLETCHER, C.B.E.,
Barrister-at-Law, Town Clerk of
Islington.

Being the substance of a lecture delivered at Caxton Hall, Westminster, S.W., April 16, 1920, to the London Students' Society of the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants (Incorporated).

(Printed by permission)

My subject is the Registration of Electors, and what I intend to do is to deal with the great epoch-making measure that was passed by Parliament in February, 1918, entitled the Representation of the People Act, 1918. That Act is contained in forty-seven sections and nine schedules. It is the third important Act relating to the registration of electors passed since 1832. It effects great changes in registration and is more comprehensive in its character than any previous measure of reform relating to the franchise known in the history of this country.

Before making some general observations upon the Act itself it may interest you to know that antiquarians generally agree that anciently the knights of the shire were elected in the county court by those who did suit and service there. It is clear that the election of knights was an original right vested in and inseparable from the freehold, and could no more be severed from the freehold than could the freehold itself be taken away. Before the Statute 8, Henry VI, Chapter 7, was passed in the year 1429 any man that had a freehold, however small it might be, had an indefeasible right of voting, but by that Statute the right of election was confined to such persons as had lands or tenements of the yearly value of forty shillings at least. It is, therefore, interesting to observe that this old franchise Act passed nearly 600 years ago was really an Act which disfranchised, because it restricted the electorate in the manner I have indicated.

Passing now to the Act of 1918 some idea can be obtained of the far-reaching consequences of the Act upon the

number of electors when I remind you that the Reform Act of 1832 added approximately 500,000 electors to those already in existence; the Representation of the People Act of 1867 added about one and a-half millions; and the Reform Act of 1884, which, as you know, created, *inter alia*, what is known as the service franchise, added some three million electors. In other words, the addition to the electorate caused by the passing of these three important measures was about five millions, whereas it is estimated that the addition to the electorate caused by the passing of the Representation of the People Act, 1918, is about ten million electors.

Speaking in general terms about the Act of 1918, I would remind you that it created a qualification for women both as parliamentary and local government electors, subject to certain prescribed conditions, and so settled, in a large measure, the controversy that had provoked much discussion, and had agitated the minds of politicians and others for many years.

Special provisions were made in the Act for the registration of sailors and soldiers and others engaged in the service of the Crown in view of the fact that the Great War was then in progress. The then existing parliamentary franchises, many of which were complicated and inconsistent, were abolished, and in addition more than fifty Acts of Parliament, and numerous other Acts were partially repealed. The period of qualification was shortened, successive occupations in a very extended form was provided, the occupation qualification was made uniform for the purpose of all local government electors, whether in London or elsewhere, and special provision was made to include lodgers living in a room or rooms let to them in an unfurnished state.

The Act abolished the ownership vote and the lodgers vote as such.

The importance of the work of registration was recognised by the creation of a registration officer who, in addition to being responsible for the preparation of the lists of electors, was also required

to undertake the revision of the lists prepared by him. Proportional representation was provided for the purpose of the university representation, and to meet the case of the numerous body of absent voters, it was provided that they should be able to record their vote by proxy, and so participate in the General Election which would result in the creation of the new Parliament to undertake, *inter alia*, the work of reconstruction.

Forty-four boroughs lost their separate representation in consequence of the passing of the Act, including ancient boroughs such as Canterbury, Chester, Christchurch, Lichfield, Shrewsbury, Windsor, &c. It was enacted further that the polling at a General Election should take place on the same day, and that the returning officers' expenses should be borne by the State. This is not an exhaustive account of the changes made, but indicates, I think, adequately the immense alterations which have been effected in relation to the work of registration and in regard to elections by this truly epoch-making measure.

The Act is divided into five parts. Part I.: Sections 1 to 10, relating to franchise; Part II.: Sections 11 to 19, registration; Part III.: Sections 20 to 36, dealing with the method and costs of elections; Part IV.: Section 37, redistribution of seats; Part V.: Comprising Sections 38 to 47, dealing with general matters.

This evening I am afraid we must restrict our consideration to Sections 1 to 10, Part I, or so much of that part of the Act as may be practicable, having regard to the time at our disposal.

Section I, relating to parliamentary franchises (men) states a man shall be entitled to be registered as a parliamentary elector for a constituency (other than a university constituency) if he is of full age and not subject to any legal incapacity, and—

- (a) has the requisite residence qualification, or
- (b) has the requisite business premises qualification.

You will therefore observe that the parliamentary franchise for men, other than the university franchise, is upon a two-fold basis, viz.: the residence qualification, and the business premises qualification. It is, however, a condition precedent to registration that a man shall be of full age and not subject to any legal incapacity. Full age means the age of twenty-one, and it is important to remember that in law a person attains that age on the day preceding his twenty-first birthday. You need also to remember that it is sufficient if the elector reaches full age before the completion of the qualifying period for his age is to be taken to be his age on the last day of the qualifying period; and therefore if a person is twenty-one years of age on the day after the end of the qualifying period, it would be sufficient to entitle him, if otherwise qualified, on the ground of age. You will notice, secondly, that a person must not be subject to any legal incapacity. The right to vote is affected by personal characteristics. You will do well to remember that this question of legal incapacity is not to be confused with a mere absence of the qualifications required by the Act to enable a person to be registered. Among persons who are subject to legal incapacity are Peers of the United Kingdom (Peers of Ireland alone excepted), aliens, idiots, lunatics, &c.

In the year 1699 the House of Commons resolved that no peer of this kingdom hath any right to give his vote at an election of any member to serve in Parliament. The right to vote is still confined to British subjects. The distinction in law between British subjects and aliens is that British subjects do, and aliens do not, owe allegiance to the Sovereign for the time being of the United Kingdom. Allegiance is the reciprocal obligation between Sovereign and subject, binding the Sovereign lawfully to protect the subject and the subject lawfully to obey the Sovereign. British subjects and aliens respectively are either born or made. Difficulty sometimes arises

because it is thought that letters of naturalisation granted to an alien while residing in the Colonies will be of like value to him when resident in this country for registration purposes, but it is not so. All such letters of naturalisation granted to persons resident in the Colony cease to apply for naturalisation purposes if such persons remove to any part of the United Kingdom. Infants, that is persons under the age of twenty-one, are not of full age and are, therefore, subject to legal incapacity. Idiots and lunatics are also subject to legal incapacity.

There is an important distinction between idiots and lunatics to be noted. An idiot is one who from his birth, by a perpetual infirmity, is *non compos mentis*, but a lunatic is, if registered, able to record his vote during a lucid interval, if at that time he is a person of sound memory, for a lunatic is a person who is sometimes of good and sound memory and understanding and sometimes not. Persons convicted of treason, or felony, or fraud, are subject to legal incapacity. A person convicted of a corrupt practice at an election is subject to legal incapacity in relation to the franchise for a period of seven years. A new case of legal incapacity created by the Act is that of a person who is a conscientious objector to whom Section 9 (2) applies, where it is provided that he shall be disqualified during the continuance of the war and for a period of five years after. These are the principal cases of legal incapacity. Persons who are subject to any form of legal incapacity are alike prohibited from being registered and from voting either at a parliamentary or local government election.

As regards the requirement that a man shall have the requisite residence qualification, it is very important to endeavour to understand as precisely as may be what is meant by residence.

When the Bill was passing through the House of Commons many attempts were made to induce the Government to define residence for the purpose of the Act, but it was left an open question.

The question of residence is one which gave rise to much litigation under previous registration Acts. Certain general principles, however, seem to have been established which may be of assistance to us for practical purposes. The primary question is whether there has been, in fact, residence or inhabitation to such an extent as to be actually in substance and in common sense residence. In the case of *Barlow v. Smith*, decided in 1892, the facts were that a man had a shop at Wigan, where he carried on business all day, but where he only slept on two occasions during the qualifying period, and then on two chairs, because there was no proper sleeping accommodation. It was held that he had not resided at Wigan. It is quite clear that temporary accommodation only for sleeping does not constitute residence for registration purposes. Accommodation for sleeping, however, is an important ingredient, because it is a well-established principle that where a person lives and sleeps and has his home is the place where he resides. In fact, residence may be said to imply home. Absence from home for a temporary period is immaterial, provided there is the *right or power* to return there without breach of legal obligation, and the *intention* to return at some future time after a temporary absence. If under compulsion of law a person cannot return to his home and reside there, such person would probably be disqualified on the ground of residence. You will observe also that residence for the purpose of this section does not involve anything further than mere residence, *i.e.*, it is not necessary to occupy as owner or tenant, nor is there any question with regard to rating or value. Residence pure and simple is sufficient in itself to give the parliamentary franchise to men, subject to the other prescribed conditions of the section being satisfied. There is, however, the provision contained in Section 7 that a man shall not be entitled to be registered as a parliamentary elector for a constituency in respect of a residence qualification though he may have been

residing in premises in the constituency on the last day of the qualifying period if he commenced to reside in the constituency within thirty days before the end of the qualifying period and ceased to reside within thirty days after the time when he so commenced to reside. That is a provision for the purpose of preventing what is known as "swallow voters." In connection with residence it is necessary to have in mind the fact that Section 7 (2) enables a house to be let for part of the qualifying period not exceeding four months in the whole without interrupting residence, for the purpose of the Act. And residence can be either actual or constructive inasmuch as a man may be in constructive residence by having his family or his servants in residence. In the case of actual residence the term is so wide that if a person does in fact actually reside it is sufficient, even if such person is a trespasser, but, on the other hand, it must not be thought that the mere payment of rent alone is equivalent to residence either actual or constructive.

(To be continued)

CONFERENCE OF LOCAL LABOUR NEWSPAPERS

A Successful Gathering

The conference of local newspapers convened by the LABOUR ORGANISER, and held at the Fabian Rooms, Westminster, on May 21, proved a successful and useful function, and in the opinion of those present a great step forward was taken towards a better understanding of the problems of Labour's local press and how to deal with them.

Approximately fifty delegates were appointed, and the conference was representative of practically the whole of the existing and prospective local papers. Mr. W. W. Henderson attended on behalf of the Party Press and Publicity Department, and Mr. Egerton Wake attended on behalf of the Party headquarters and was voted to the chair.

An interesting and detailed state-

ment was given by Mr. Henderson of the work of his department and its interest in the subject matter of the conference, whose gathering he welcomed and whose views and suggestions he was anxious to hear. Mention was made of improvements and additions to the news services already existing, and of steps taken or contemplated to bring the department to the service of the local papers. Certain difficulties were mentioned, largely arising from the diverse needs of the existing papers. The department would meet all reasonable demands to make the present news service sheet adaptable to a local purpose, and facilities had been arranged for localising or supplying the service in alternative forms. It was intended that when a series of district conferences took place, which were contemplated by the Party, attention should be given at the conferences to the whole question of publicity, embracing the development of newspapers and services, and the speaker anticipated considerable value would be derived from these discussions.

A number of suggestions from various speakers followed Mr. Henderson's statement, and if the conference had one fault it was that the news and editorial problems absorbed the whole attention, to the exclusion of equally absorbing business questions. Some valuable suggestions were, however, made from both sides, resulting in certain new facilities being promised. It appeared that the question of standardisation both as to size of paper and day of publication might become an important factor in the extension of services. On the question of advertisement, Mr. Henderson announced an experiment in advertising arrangements so far as the Party were concerned, and it was thought a future development from that source might solve other problems that were known to exist.

The following resolution was ultimately passed:—

That this conference, realising the need for co-operation between local

Labour journals, requests the Publicity Department to inquire into the scope and condition of the Labour press in the country for the purpose of drafting a report covering the phases of possible co-operation, including the provision of an advertisement service, such a report to be submitted to further conferences to be held in the districts.

Other resolutions were passed of a minor character, and the LABOUR ORGANISER was thanked for the services rendered in connection with the conference.

[Pressure of space compels us to hold over several interesting news items. Next month we shall publish a complete Directory of Local Labour Newspapers.]

AN IMPROVED CANVASSING SYSTEM

A Scientific Device for a Well-organised Constituency

We are indebted to Mr. Ben Wilson, who is now the organiser for the North Islington Labour Party (403 Hornsey Road, London, N. 19), for an explanation of an ingenious and scientific canvassing system introduced by him and quite recently put in operation at a U.D.C. election at Finchley. That the system worked on the whole successfully is proved by the result of the election referred to, for very substantial majorities were secured, in one case in what had hitherto been regarded as the stronghold of the enemy.

The system fundamentally depends upon the collection and use of the names and addresses of trade unionists, co-operators, &c., advocated in the LABOUR ORGANISER in our November issue. In the article referred to we advocated the addition to the original canvass card of any information concerning a voter's membership of such bodies. Mr. Wilson's system is a considerable elaboration of this plan.

The first interesting point is the adaptation of a one-sided register. The pages have been passed through a duplicator for the purpose of ruling the blank sides with columns for tabulating the information acquired. The particu-

lar ruling adopted is ingenious, and the register has been ruled to retain the records of three types of elections should such be necessary. The innovation with which we do not entirely agree is the tabulation of the canvass results into "Certs." and "Probables," this being again sub-divided into "Labour," "Liberal," and "Conservative." The six divisions so secured is, we think, too elaborate for the ordinary canvasser, and added to the features mentioned below would require very expert work for the results to be of the desired value. Personally we think columns "For," and "Against," and "Doubtful" fulfil all that is needed in the vast majority of cases and all that is obtainable or reliable, and that it does not much matter what the canvass of "Against" may amount to. This is said in no detraction of the experiment made, and we highly commend the idea of duplication on the reverse of the printed registers. It is cheaper than interleaving, and when re-bound the information is of course in every case on the right-hand side of the register as it opens.

A particular feature of the scheme under notice is, however, the way in which the information previously collected as to a voter's membership is adapted for the purpose of the canvass. Thus instead of all canvass cards being of the same colour and a column ruled showing trade unionist, co-operator, &c., as advocated in the LABOUR ORGANISER, there are four coloured cards, viz., yellow, "Individual member"; pink, "Trade unionist"; blue, "Co-operator"; white, "Unknown voter," and a pack of cards ready for canvass are done up in a neat little cover with a draw-out cord tag which enables any card to be easily removed and the whole of them to be carried about in a compact form. The cover is certainly a useful device and convenient in use.

It is claimed on behalf of this colour scheme that the impression one gets from the colour immediately on taking up a book is valuable, and that the

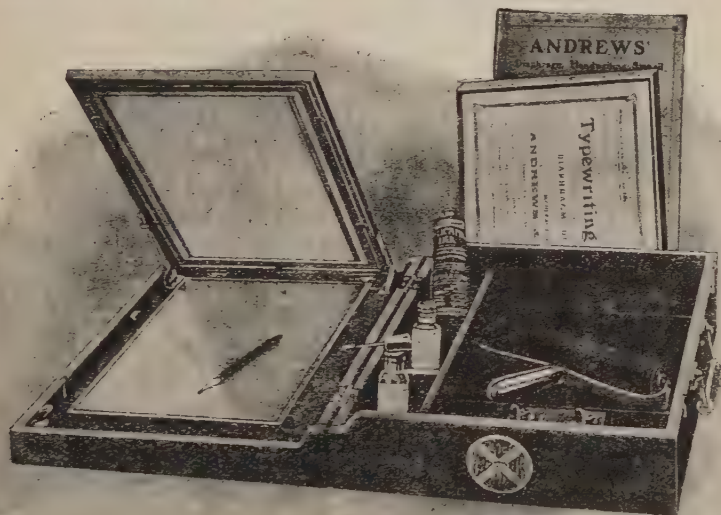
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information is more easily noted by the canvasser. The indoor advantages of the colouring are stated to be very large. Thus in the election above referred to it was possible to get out a special circular to all the blues with very little trouble, and specialisation on a particular class of elector on polling day or any other occasion is also made more simple and feasible.

Regarding the objection raised by us that a man may be both a co-operator, a trade unionist, and an individual member, we are informed that in that case the colour of the card was determined by the degree to which it was thought the particular voter would attach to his membership. We hardly think this is perfect or would work satisfactorily, but there is a good deal to be said for several of the ideas embodied in the scheme under notice, and we gather from Mr. Wilson that in some directions it must be regarded as experimental. We are a long way yet from having got the best system by

which records may be secured from the doorstep work so essential at election times, and, while not committing ourselves to a full approval of any of the present attempts that are being made at improvement, we feel that those who are seeking to discover a more satisfactory system are engaged on a commendable task and incidentally helping to bring home to the Movement the tremendous necessity of combating capitalistic influence, and particularly Press influence, on the doorsteps of the people.

According to a Wee Free report there are at least three principal Coalition men organisers operating in the Midlands, not to mention the ladies, "all seeking to find a Party for the Coalition." Guess it must be awful for these flannel-footed Wee Free's—waiting. History leaves no doubt as to the Party from which the Tories draw their recruits.

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THE PROVINCIAL LABOUR PRESS PROBLEM

How it May be Solved

By W. J. CHAMBERLAIN

[Mr. W. J. Chamberlain is the Editor of the "Town Crier" (Birmingham), one of the Midland Associated Group of Labour newspapers printed at Leicester. The writer speaks with a full knowledge of his subject, having entered the newspaper world at the age of fifteen and the Labour Movement at the age of twenty.—ED.]

One of the facts not sufficiently grasped by the Labour Movement is that the solution of the problem of how best to build up an effective Labour Press in this country lies not in London but in the provinces. I yield to none in my fervour in thanking whatever gods there be for the *Herald*; but the Labour Movement will never be in a position to hold its own against the anti-Labour Press of the country while it rests content with allowing one gallant

little Labour fighting cock in Carmelite Street to fight single-handed (or should it be single-beaked?) against a whole barnyard full of Capitalist fighting cocks. The odds are overwhelmingly against the Labour rooster all the time.

The anti-Labour forces of the country are keenly alive to the value of their provincial Press. They know that their morning and evening papers in the large industrial centres reach more people daily than are reached by the London morning papers. In Birmingham, for instance, the local Tories could afford to dispense with any or all of the London Tory dailies, provided they were left with the Birmingham *Post* and *Mail*. The *Daily News* could cease to be to-morrow without affecting the fate of the Liberal Party in Birmingham, provided the Liberal *Gazette* and *Despatch* remain. And if the Labour Party is to gain power and hold power it will have to face up to the job of creating an effective Labour Press in the provinces that will counteract the

influence of the anti-Labour provincial Press.

The history of the attempt to build up a provincial Labour Press in this country has hitherto been one long tragedy of wasted efforts, and the comparatively few papers that have survived this tragedy are even now in none too robust health. What is the secret of this tragedy? Of course one cannot sum it up in a sentence; but I think I should not be far wide of the mark in saying that perhaps the chief reason for the present position of the provincial Labour Press in this country is the fact that so many people in the Labour Movement still hold the view that all that is needed in the making of a successful Labour weekly may be found in a paste-pot, a pair of scissors, a fountain pen, some copy-paper, a blue pencil, and a waste-paper basket. (Judging from the contents of some of the earlier attempts, it would appear that their editors dispensed with the waste-paper basket entirely!) Editing and running a Labour weekly was, and is still, regarded in many quarters as an odd job with which the local trades council or Labour Party secretary might fill up his leisure (?) hours.

Now, that kind of thing is just fooling about with a very serious matter. If an effective Labour Press is to be built up in this country, it will have to be done on scientific lines. The Labour Movement will have to take several leaves out of the capitalist's book and aim at organising its resources so that the maximum of efficiency may be obtained. The outstanding fact of the present situation in the newspaper world is that for good or ill the British newspaper-reading public has been educated up (or down) to a certain standard of journalism in which the "acid test" is not so much the nature of the matter contained in a paper, but rather whether that matter is presented in a form sufficiently attractive to satisfy a consciously or subconsciously critical taste. The arrangement of headlines and the general make-up of a paper may easily decide whether a paper is to succeed or

fall. For very obvious reasons past attempts at establishing Labour weeklies in the provinces have not been marked by any such considerations—and the attempts have failed.

I want to try to make this short article as helpful as possible, and perhaps the best way of doing that will be to start right here with a brief word or two of what is being done to build up a Labour Press in the Midlands. When the *Town Crier* was started about two years ago I knew from my experience on the capitalist Press that we could not hope to compete with the local anti-Labour Press in the matter of ordinary newsgetting. I have seen £50,000 spent on a provincial paper before it had been in existence six months; and I realised that the most we could do at the outset was to give the members of the local Labour Movement a paper that would keep them in close touch with their own movement, deal with local happenings from a Labour point of view, and get to as many of the non-Labour members of the public as could be induced to buy the paper on its merits. There was little or no money to spare in the movement. We could not afford the wages of a reporter; everything had to be done on the absolute minimum of expense. What money we could spare was divided between the editorial and advertisement canvassing staff (all two of them!). My aim was to get the last ounce out of the resources at my disposal. With the aid of a glorious little company of voluntary newsggetters and contributors I soon found myself producing a paper that compared favourably with the local capitalist papers from the point of view of its general appearance. I venture this piece of blatant egotism because the editor of the local Liberal daily went so far as to compliment our paper on its make-up.

So far, so good. But I was under no illusion about the possibilities of making good "off our own bat." I could see no such possibility. I knew that the only

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hope for the provincial Labour Press lay in the pooling of resources in a given area, a central publishing office, and co-operative production based on the "chain paper" scheme which has been in operation with the provincial capitalist Press for years past. That was where Mr. W. W. Borrett, manager of the Midland Branch of the National Labour Press at Leicester, came in. I found him as keen as myself on the business of building up a Labour Press in the Midlands. The advertisement and circulation revenue of the *Town Crier* was by this time such as to justify the belief that the saving of a few pounds here and the gaining of a few pounds there would make the paper a sound proposition. Mr. Borrett and I worked out a scheme of joint publication of the Leicester *Pioneer* and the *Town Crier*, which at once effected a considerable saving on both papers. Then we saved the Derbyshire *Worker* from extinction by taking it into our scheme. Later on the Nottingham *Tribune* was started as another of the series to be published from our Leicester office. Other towns in the Midlands are considering the matter of an extension of our series in their direction, and there is every prospect of the whole of the Midlands being covered in the near future.

The advantages of such a scheme will be obvious. First, perhaps, as a member of the National Union of Journalists, I should place the fact that this scheme ensures that professional journalists are in charge of the whole series at the central publishing office. Then there is the fact that those in the districts requiring localised editions of the existing papers, or even new papers of their own, have the minimum of establishment expense to meet (practically all that is required is a small guarantee to ensure reasonable salaries for the local newsgetting and advertisement canvassing staff in the first few months). There are many other advantages in the scheme, but space forbids more than this brief mention of its main points.

With up-to-date Labour printing establishments in London, Manchester, the Midlands, and South Wales, the possibilities of the extension of the Midland scheme over the whole of the country are enormous. Given a sufficient number of Labour weeklies in any area, the next obvious step will be the lumping together of the whole series into a Labour evening paper for that particular area. With a Labour evening paper covering every town in the country one would be justified in singing the *Nunc Dimittis*!

I have deliberately made this article tantalisingly incomplete so far as actual details are concerned. My object has been to get the main idea into the heads of my readers. With the Editor's permission I should be glad to write a second article which would reply to most of the questions arising out of these introductory remarks. Meanwhile, either Mr. Borrett (Blackfriars Press, 17-23 Albion Street, Leicester) or myself would be glad to forward the fullest particulars of the Midland scheme to anyone who may require them.

IMPORTANT NEW STATUTORY RULES

Registration Powers Transferred to the Home Office

An Order in Council of considerable importance has recently been made, under which the powers and duties exercised and performed by the Minister of Health, as successor to the Local Government Board under the Representation of the People Act, 1918, are now transferred to the Secretary of State for the Home Office. It should be particularly noted in future that all communications in relation to the administration of the Act and Acts should be addressed to the Under-Secretary of State, Home Office, Whitehall, S.W. 1.

Of great importance also to all concerned with the work of registration is the issue of new statutory rules consolidating all previous rules and Orders under the Representation of the People

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Act. The new Order is published as R.P. 109 (price 9d. net), and a copy should be in the hands of every agent or secretary concerned in the work of registration. The difficulties of working under the previous Order (R.P. 82) with all its subsequent supplementary modifying rules and Orders has been greatly felt, and the new Order is of course indispensable to, and in practice ranks with, the Acts themselves. Incidentally it should be noted that the proper reference of the 1918 Act and its amending Acts is the "Representation of the People Acts, 1918 to 1920."

Issued with the above quoted Order as an R.P. is a further circular (R.P. 111) of considerable importance. Several points of application are therein laid down and a direction of considerable importance concerning the business premises qualification is given. The following three points are especially worth noting:—

"A woman is not entitled to the business premises franchise; but if she is the occupier of premises for the purpose of her business, profession, or trade she may be registered as a parliamentary elector for those premises in pursuance of Section 4 (1) of the Act by reason of her occupation of premises being such as entitles her to be registered as a local government elector subject to the yearly value of the premises (if not a dwelling-house) being not less than five pounds. In such a case, the woman's qualification should be shown in the register by the letter 'O.'"

"Again, in the case of a married woman who derives her qualification for the parliamentary franchise from the occupation by her husband of land or premises entitling him to be registered as a local government elector, the qualification of the woman should be shown in the register by the letters 'H.O.' whether or not the husband is registered for the business premises franchise in respect of the land or premises."

"It is desirable that any registration officer who receives a claim from a naval

or military voter to be registered in respect of his actual residence qualification should as soon as practicable notify the fact of its receipt to the registration officer of the constituency for which the voter should have taken steps not to be registered. The notice should indicate the qualifying address in that constituency, and if this information is not given in the declaration in R.P. 28 the claimant should be asked to furnish it."

OUR POSTER COMPETITION

We regret that owing to the present industrial crisis and other causes it has not been convenient to secure a meeting of the judges. The announcement of the prize-winners is therefore unavoidably held over till next month.

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